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Research = Dividends Medical Funds Will Benefit State

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RESEARCH at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation should get a tax-funded boost as a result of the recent federal budget bill.

Members of the state congressional delegation, including Sen. Don Nickles, worked to boost federal revenues for medical research. In a "Point of View" on today's editorial page, Presbyterian Health Foundation President Jean Gumerson hails the step and the Ponca City Republican's role in it.

J. Donald Capra, president of the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, hailed Rep. Ernest **Istook**, R-Warr Acres, in a press release this week: "Congressman **Istook** has recognized and addressed a problem that has existed for over two decades, but that few have done anything about. This will have more impact on Oklahoma than almost anything else done in Congress this year."

The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research program that **Istook** pushed into law will boost research monies in states such as Oklahoma, which has been getting far less than our per capita share in such spending. Federal revenue is a traditional source, along with private dollars, for scientific research funding. Beneficiaries of the new focus include the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Istook, known for fiscal conservatism, even when something hereabouts might benefit, said the program helps the state and the nation: "This is about more than medical research dollars. It's about quality of life. As Oklahoma improves its health infrastructure, we will attract more grants, more higher paying jobs and access to better public health facilities for everyone." And, "because of Oklahoma's low cost-of-living," the federal research dollar "stretches farther here, rather than supporting ultra-high overhead that's common elsewhere."

Istook, Nickles and the rest who serve in the nation's best congressional delegation, have worked to redress historic inequities facing our state, directing federal dollars into an area which has traditionally paid rich dividends for taxpayers.

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